

**AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS**

**This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:**

**LISTING OF CLAIMS:**

**1. (currently amended):** An isolated ~~lactic acid bacterial strain belonging to the genus *Lactococcus* and isolated from human stool, wherein the bacterial strain is *Lactococcus garvieae* 20-92 deposited under FERM BP-10036 and the bacterial strain has an ability to utilize at least one daidzein compound selected from the group consisting of daidzein glycosides, daidzein, and dihydrodaidzein to produce equol.~~

**2.-3. (canceled).**

**4. (currently amended):** A composition comprising the isolated *Lactococcus garvieae* 20-92~~lactic acid bacterial strain belonging to the genus *Lactococcus*~~ according to Claim 1 and at least one member selected from the group consisting of daidzein compounds and daidzein compound-containing ingredients.

**5. (original):** The composition according to Claim 4, wherein the daidzein compound-containing ingredient is soybean flour or soy milk.

**6. (original):** The composition according to Claim 4 which is in the form of a beverage or a milk product.

7. **(original):** The composition according to Claim 4 further comprising equol.
8. **(original):** The composition according to Claim 7 which is in the form of a fermentation product of soy milk.
9. **(withdrawn-currently amended):** A method of producing equol comprising the step of letting ~~an~~the isolated lactic acid bacterial strain ~~belonging to the genus *Lactococcus* and isolated from human stool, wherein the bacterial strain is *Lactococcus garvieae* 20-92 deposited under FERM BP 10036 and the bacterial strain has an ability to utilize a daidzein compound to produce equol, according to Claim 1 act on at least one member selected from the group consisting of daidzein compounds and daidzein compound-containing ingredients.~~
10. -11. **(canceled).**
12. **(withdrawn):** The method according to Claim 9, wherein the daidzein compound-containing ingredient is soybean flour or soy milk.
13. **(canceled).**
14. **(currently amended):** A composition comprising the isolated ~~lactic acid bacterial strain belonging to *Lactococcus garvieae* 20-92~~ according to Claim 1 and an edible or pharmaceutically acceptable carrier.

**15. (canceled).**